

Creative Writing Prompts

Historical Genre



**Historical/Medieval Writing Prompts**

**Writing Prompt 30:**

The middle ages. One of the famous “morality plays” is played in the village. These are basically thinly veiled guidelines for the people on how to behave. This one is for kids though, and very short to allow for their attention span. It tells kids how to behave properly, so mom and dad will love them and they won’t go to hell.

The play features Adam, the good kid, clean and in white like an angel; and Roger, the bad kid, looking nasty in rugs and always misbehaving. Several allegories are also around: Obedience is a thin figure in a long, flowing dress, always looking down. Diligence is a muscular guy with rolled up sleeves and leather apron; Adam tries to be like him, while Roger bites his leg. In the end, Adam is showered with candy toys and even a pet calf, while Roger gets a bloodletting and an ass-whipping. But suddenly the kids in the audience start to cheer and stamp: The calf has lifted its tail and peed all over Adam!

Do the kids get their own morality out of that play? How will the director and authorities turn this around to keep them in line? Will independent thinking or order prevail? You decide!

*How you can make this scene shine:*

Create a couple more figures for the “play within the play.” If you constantly switch between the reality of the village and the reality in the play, it will make for nice variety. Get creative on both ends!

**Writing Prompt 31:**

Francis is a troubadour all girls have a crush on, kind of the Justin Bieber of the 12th century. He has been courting charming Amalia night after night under her window. Tonight, he sings her his romantic poem “Thou Art the Bellows of Mine Heart.”

Amalia is enchanted, but soon rumbling is heard in the house: Her father has woken up, and that usually leads to him chasing Francis around the house with a rolling pin. He is a wealthy merchant and doesn’t approve of her tie to a penniless poet. The rumbling becomes louder while they speak.

Finally, merchant Robertson rips open the front door and screams up at his daughter: “What happened to the rolling pin!!?” Turns out Amalia has wisely hidden it… Will merchant Robertson get even angrier now? Or will he be charmed by his baby’s wit? Will he do damage to her poor suitor? You decide!

*How you can make this scene shine:*

Love is in the air, so describe how and why these two are sighing/yearning for each other: The longing, the flirting, the plans. Draw from romances in your own life, because love never changed throughout the centuries. Disrupt that romance with an angry, drowsy man for great effect!

**Writing Prompt 32:**

Ancient Rome: On a big “forum” (square), a slave auction is held. Huno, a big, muscular Alemannic slave in heavy chains is next in line. Gaius, a newly rich plebeian, wants to acquire him so he can wear himself out on his construction sites by pulling heavy blocks. Gracelanus, a town clerk, would treat Huno much better and use him as a body guard.

Huno is ordered to demonstrate his power, and he breaks thick logs of wood over his thighs. Gaius lets out humiliating comments like “Work it, proud animal!” or “All the brains are in his upper arms.” He gives him the whip several times to test his resilience. Gracelanus, on the other hand, remains quiet, only to applaud the demonstrations.

When the bid goes to 800 sesterces, these two are the only bidders left. Gaius is hesitating for a moment, and suddenly Huno turns to the side of the stage and lets a heavy log fall on Gaius’ feet. Screaming and swearing, Gaius jumps in circles, while the bid goes to Gracelanus. Will Gaius accept his defeat, or will he get back at them? If Huno is provoked further, can he keep his cool? You decide!

*How you can make this scene shine:*

Slavery is disgusting to the modern reader. It has an even bigger effect, if you, the author, don’t judge. Just present the auction as everyday life. Huno’s humility to his own fate, Gaius’ cruelness… try to describe it without emotions.